Educational Session

2822 - Enhancing a Transfer Student’s On-Campus Experience
Transition Programs and Supports, Special Populations

Living-Learning Programs provide students with the opportunity to thrive both in and out of the classroom in a learning environment that becomes home. The Transfer Experience living-learning community is specifically designed to meet the needs of students who transfer to our institution from a community college or another four-year institution. This presentation will share how Transfer Experience came to be and how we continue to serve our transfer students living on campus.

Allison Silknitter, Assistant Director, Transfer Student Initiatives
Virginia Tech
TRANSFER EXPERIENCE

A TRANSFER STUDENT LIVING-LEARNING COMMUNITY AT VIRGINIA TECH®

Allison Silknetter
Assistant Director, Transfer Student Initiatives
Virginia Tech
Agenda

- Introduction
- What are LLCs and why are they beneficial to students?
- Creation of Transfer Experience
- What Transfer Experience looks like today
- Breakout rooms
- Q&A
About Me

- Elementary school teacher for 8 years
- 2019 began at Virginia Tech as the Program Director for the Transfer Experience LLC
- 2022 began working as the Assistant Director of Transfer Students Initiatives, which includes continued oversight of the LLC
Our Institution

- Large, public, state and land-grant institution located in Blacksburg, VA
- Total student enrollment of around 37,000 and undergraduate enrollment of 30,000
  - 3,031 transfer students
- 1 in 10 VT graduates come to campus as a transfer student

Fall ‘22
What is a living-learning community?

- Living-Learning Program (LLP) is the umbrella term containing both residential colleges and living-learning communities at Virginia Tech.
- Residential colleges are led by live-in faculty principals and focus on interdisciplinary, multigenerational connections.
- Living-Learning Communities (LLCs) are niche communities built around a particular theme. Each LLC is led by a Program Director.
Why LLCs?

- LLCs have shown to increase overall satisfaction in college, as well as retention rates and academic performance (Arensdorf & Naylor-Tincknell, 2016).
- The goals within LLCs are to emphasize involvement within the community and encourage students to seek support to ease their transition to a new university. Students in an LLC resulted in greater intellectual orientation, compared to students who did not live in an LLC (Stassen, 2003).
- When students are placed in a community that relates to one another, it is easier to bond. There is a sense of community, especially when there is an effort put forth from student affairs practitioners to show support towards students (Inkelas et al., 2006).
## Fall 2021 - Residential Experience Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All Students</th>
<th>General Population</th>
<th>All LLP</th>
<th>Transfer Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My community helped me develop a sense of belonging</td>
<td>82.61</td>
<td>80.17</td>
<td>84.63</td>
<td>91.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My community helped me make friends</td>
<td>82.61</td>
<td>82.28</td>
<td>83.30</td>
<td>89.19</td>
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<tr>
<td>My community helped me get involved on campus</td>
<td>72.07</td>
<td>70.25</td>
<td>74.95</td>
<td>86.49</td>
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<tr>
<td>My community helped me gain leadership skills</td>
<td>64.72</td>
<td>57.38</td>
<td>68.50</td>
<td>62.16</td>
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<tr>
<td>My community helped me succeed in my coursework</td>
<td>71.49</td>
<td>70.25</td>
<td>72.87</td>
<td>75.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My community helped me connect to resources around campus</td>
<td>81.61</td>
<td>80.38</td>
<td>83.30</td>
<td>91.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My community helped promote my personal well-being</td>
<td>77.93</td>
<td>76.58</td>
<td>80.65</td>
<td>91.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My community enhanced my quality of life at Virginia Tech</td>
<td>81.27</td>
<td>79.96</td>
<td>85.39</td>
<td>91.89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On a scale of 0 to 10, how likely are you to recommend your living learning program to a friend or other Virginia Tech student? (Average score) | 7.84        | 8.31               |
May 2018

- A spring survey of transfers showed dissatisfaction with campus housing.
- VT moved forward with a plan to pilot a transfer student living learning community beginning in Fall 2018.
LLC Creation - behind the scenes

- A memorandum of understanding between Housing and Residence Life and the Office of Student Success Initiatives within Undergraduate Academic Affairs was created.
- An LLC advisory committee of campus partners met monthly.
LLC Creation - student life

- 69 transfer students lived in the community in two separate Greek life houses
- GA hired as the Program Director, now a full time position
- Weekly curricular and cocurricular events were planned
LLC Creation - Budget

- In lieu of a student fee, funding was provided by Housing and Residence Life for the LLC’s first year.
- After its initial year, LLC funding now comes from a $50/semester student fee.
Where Are We Now?
After moving to various residence halls on campus, Transfer Experience settled into a 275 bed residence hall. The LLC occupies 182 of those beds (3 out of 4 floors).
RAs were previously assigned to Transfer Experience without any prior connection.

Now, our RAs are selected from previous Transfer Experience members, specifically selected to aid the transfer student journey.
LLC Events

- Weekly socials build community within the LLC and expose students to campus resources
- Found success with social rather than academic events
Transfer FYE

- 1 credit Transfer First Year Experience (FYE) course - UNIV 2114 Unleash Your Hokie Potential
- Optional for all transfer students on campus, but required for new LLC members
- Guest speakers connect students to campus resources
- Former transfer students are hired as class TAs
Role of the Program Director

- Plan, request, market and execute weekly community events
- Teach 1 section of the transfer FYE course
- Review applications for prospective LLC members
- Market the LLC to incoming transfer students
- Run the monthly advisory committee meetings
- Meet monthly with all LLP Program Directors across campus
- Run community social media pages
- Manage community budget
Role of Leadership Council

- Students apply and are chosen to be community leaders
- Run many day-of event logistics
- Contribute to community social media
- Generate event ideas
- President, VP, Secretary, Campus Coordinator, Social Chairs & Members-at-Large
Role of the Returner

- New initiative for Fall ‘23
- Creating a Pod Program where returning transfer students will act as mentors for new transfers in the community
- Each new transfer will be assigned a small group (pod) with two returning leaders
What’s Next on Your Campus?
Resources


Thank you!

Allison Silknetter asilknetter@vt.edu

https://advising.vt.edu/transfer-student-advising.html

https://llp.vt.edu/llc/transfer.html